

Los Gatos Birdwatcher



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6th Annual Photographers Exhibit Sunday August 21st

by Freddy Howell

For the last six years we have been presenting local photographers in an exhibit each August. This year's exhibit will be held Sunday, August 21 from noon to 4PM.

For those of you that have attended the Photo Exhibit in the past, you know how jaw-dropping some of the photographs have been and how the photographers have improved with each showing. We have many new photographers this year as well as many that have been with us since the beginning. Most of the photographers will be present and able to answer technical questions.

Most photographs will be available for purchase from the photographer. Many photographers will have greeting cards of their work for sale.

Refreshments will be served.



Ask The Expert from Horticulture John Dotter

Saturday, September 10
10:30 am to Noon

*Call to reserve your space.
No Charge*

*See page 2 for Los Gatos Birdwatcher
Gardening for Wildlife, Insiders Info*

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher for a presentation by John Dotter, MA Master Gardener, who will present a gardening class for attracting wildlife to your yard in a sustainable and ecological way.

Come with your questions about:

- Sustainable Landscaping
- Landscape Renovation & Design
- Right Plant – Right Place
- Ecological Landscape Maintenance
- Pest Control using safe Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods
- Tool Selection & Quality Pruning

Gardening for Wildlife

The Los Gatos Birdwatcher is here to help...

Habitat is key to attracting the widest variety of birds to your backyard. Birds have four basic needs: food, water, shelter, habitat. You can offer food for seed eaters by presenting quality seed in a variety of specialty feeders, but not all birds eat seed. You can take care of more species of birds with a birdbath or water feature, but they need shelter to preen safely. You can provide shelter for cavity nesters by putting up a variety of houses with different hole diameters. However, many birds don't use cavities. If you also plant trees, shrubs and flowers that are attractive to a variety of birds, you will see much more activity in your yard.

Why Gardening for Birds is Important

Increased development in our area has led to habitat reduction and fragmentation of habitat. Researchers have noticed a significant decline in numbers of migratory songbirds. The loss of habitat in breeding grounds, wintering areas and along migratory routes is devastating both migrant and resident songbirds. Since there are fewer large undisturbed forest tracts, smaller wood lots in individual yards become increasingly important to songbirds. Many areas have also been planted with exotic (non-native) plants which are not always adopted by birds. Native planting can reduce water usage, reduce maintenance, and reduce the need for chemical fertilizers. By planning your habitat to include the trees of your neighbor's, you can develop a larger connecting habitat for the birds.

Cover is very important for several reasons. First and foremost it provides protection from predators

(raptors, cats, and humans.) Cover also provides shelter from inclement weather and places for some birds to build nests without being seen. Cover can take the form of trees, shrubs, dense tall grasses, vines, rock piles, and brush piles. If you have many deciduous trees, consider adding some evergreen plants for cover during the winter.

In new development, with little vegetation, consider creating "instant cover" by using your discarded Christmas tree to create a brush pile. Potted plants or container gardens with annuals and perennials for hummingbirds is quick and easy. Plant a line of sunflowers along the fence and watch the show as goldfinch strip the leaves while waiting for the flowers to turn to seed.

Plantings are not only important for cover but also provide habitat for other bird behavior. By having both large trees for canopy and a leafy subcanopy allows some birds to sing and feed in one, nest in the other. A variety of plantings will also allow for display areas and singing posts. Consider planting vegetation that flowers and produces fruit in succession through the seasons (i.e. high fat fruit ripens in the fall just in time for the migratory birds). Leaf litter is important for scratchers like towhees and California thrasher.

Bringing birds to your yard is beneficial for several other reasons. They bring lots of enjoyment with them as well as performing insect control and plant pollination duties. By reducing or eliminating the use of pesticides, you can foster a healthy environment enjoyed by the birds, your children and pets.

Plant Possibilities

The list below is by no means inclusive. There are many more native and non-native species that work well for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

- Native Oaks (jays, woodpeckers, chickadees, titmouse, hummingbirds)
- Madrone (band-tailed pigeons, cedar waxwings, pine siskins)
- Manzanita (hummingbirds, butterflies)
- Toyon (flicker, robin, mocking-bird, cedar waxwing, deer)
- Ceanothus (towhee, white crowned sparrow, western bluebird)
- Elderberry (towhee, cedar waxwings, robin, western bluebird)
- Willow (hummingbirds, butterflies)

Hummingbird and Butterfly Favorites

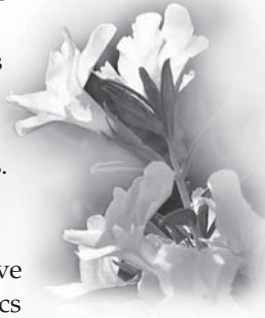
- Lantana
- Sages
- California Fuchsia
- Penstemon
- Sticky Monkey Flower
- Western Columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*)
- Hound's Tongue (*Cynoglossum grande*)
- Red Larkspur (*Delphinium cardinale*)
- Island Bush Snapdragon (*Galvezia speciosa*)
- Bladder Pod (*Isomeris arborea*)
- Twinberry (*Native honeysuckle*)
- Wild Gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*)
- Woolly blue curls (*Trichostemma lanatum*)
- Quail Bush (*Atriplex lentiformis*)

Plants to Avoid

According to the "Don't plant a pest!" brochure published by the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC),



“over half of the plants currently damaging California’s wildlands were originally introduced for landscaping purposes. Garden escapes like pampas grass and Scotch broom may have desirable characteristics in a garden setting, but outside the garden these plants displace native species and alter natural processes.”



“Some of these plants show weedy tendencies in the garden as well. For example, English ivy can take over a yard and damage buildings and fences. Likewise, when birds drop

seeds near a stream, English ivy can take over native vegetation and degrade wildlife habitat.”

“Invasive plants are by nature a regional problem. A plant that jumps out of the garden in one climate and habitat type may behave perfectly in another.”

The brochure lists twelve local problem plants, the reasons they are problems, alternative suggestions, and what kind of growing conditions are required. For example: Don’t plant: periwinkle (*Vinca major*) This aggressive grower has trailing stems that root wherever they touch the soil. This ability to resprout from stem fragments enables periwinkle

to spread rapidly in shady creeks and drainages, smothering the native plant community. Instead try; pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*), Serbian bellflower (*Campanula poscharskyana*), ivory star jasmine (*Trachelospermum asiaticum*), wild ginger (*Asarum caudatum*), or bear’s foot hellebore (*Helleborus foetidus*).

For a complete listing of the twelve problem plants and their alternatives, ask us for a copy of “Don’t Plant a Pest!” or visit Cal-IPC’s website at www.cal-ipc.org or call them at 510/843-3902.

Services Available from the Los Gatos Birdwatcher

- **Feeder Cleaning** – Drop off your feeders any day of the week. We clean on Mondays and Thursdays, asking only a donation to one of four charities (Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center, Nike Animal Rescue Foundation, and Friends of San Martin Animal Shelter). If possible, please bring your feeders in early in the day. We will call you by closing for pickup.

- **Frequent Buyer Program**, buy 9 bags 20# or higher of the same seed and get the 10th one free. Coupons do not apply.

- **Seed Delivery** in the local area, free for over \$40 total, \$4 charge for under \$40 total, available on Tuesdays and Fridays.

- **Monthly children’s nature programs** and children’s programs for pre-schools through 3rd grade. Also great for scout troops. For more information, ask for our new “Educational Programs Insiders Info” Sheet.

- **Outreach to community organizations** about birding. We have birding and “Show and Tell” programs ideal for gardening and other service groups.

- **Backyard Bird Consulting Program** - Freddy will come out and see what you have, what you want, and what might work. The consultation is about an hour and the cost is \$20, which will be applied to any purchase of new feeders, seed, baths, or hardware.

- **Birthday parties with Build a Seed Feeder workshop.** Bring 11 of your friends to the **Los Gatos Birdwatcher** (or at your desired location) and build a birdfeeder. Learn about the different birds that are likely to come to the small hopper feeder that you construct from a pre-cut wooden kit. (Includes a packet of seed, use of tools, and instruction.) **Cost:** \$15 instructor fee + \$10/child

- We offer **Gift Certificates** and our popular “**Drop a Hint**” cards that allow you to choose a selection of gifts you would like (wish list) to be considered and when the gift giver comes in with the list, we know exactly what you want.

- Spend \$100 or more and receive our new **reusable canvas tote** with royal blue handles – quite spiffy! The tote is also for sale for \$3.99 and would make a good “wrapping” for a gift.



- 15% off one item Coupon is available every two months. You

don’t have to bring in the physical coupon, but you do have to let us know at the time of the sale that you would like to use it. We do not apply the coupon automatically. The coupon excludes optics, trips and sale items. Coupon does not apply to Frequent Buy purchases.

So, What is Milo and Why Don't My Birds Eat It?

by Freddy Howell

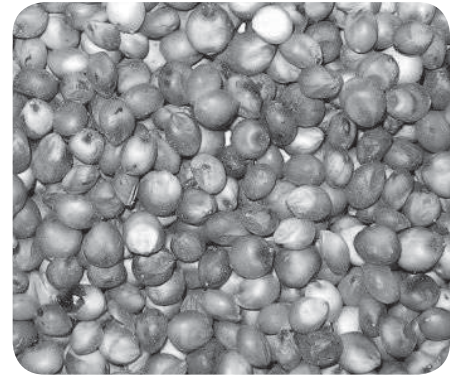
Milo is one of the main ingredients in many low grade and inexpensive bird seed blends that are found in most grocery stores, hardware stores, and some pet stores. It is a filler so in the area of bird attractiveness, it is way down on their list. Many customers have complained that when they ran out of seed and were unable to get to the Los Gatos Birdwatcher, they resorted to grocery store fare only to be told by the birds that it was unacceptable.



will discard it and pick up another one until they find one that is "just right." Most seed eating birds augment their diet with insects and they feed their babies insects to provide protein. Mealworms and insect suet have been very popular this baby season. The suet provides both protein and fat in one quick stop.

The National Bird Feeding Society (NBFS) has a great chart that shows the fat, fiber, and protein percentage content of all the major bird seed ingredients. (see below)

According to the NBFS website "Birdseed such as Milo is unattractive to most birds visiting bird feeders. Thus, purchasing bird food blends containing large amounts of Milo result in bird seed that goes unused and a poor bird feeding experience." The website also lists the various birds who are attracted to each type of seed. Under Milo: "Attracts: None."



Under cracked corn: "Attracts: Jays." Two other drawbacks to Milo are weed growth and rodent attractiveness. When the birds shovel out the Milo onto the ground from the feeder, except for Rock (City) Pigeons, the only takers are mice and rats.

Our seed blends have never contained Milo, only quality ingredients the birds will eat. On your next visit, ask for your own personal copy of our **Backyard Bird Seed Preference Chart** which shows who likes all our mixes, what type of feeder to present them in, and who likes nectar, suet, and mealworms.

Milo is a high tannin sorghum that was developed in the dry central plains states primarily for animal feed. When combined with corn, Milo provides higher feed efficiency for cattle than corn by itself according to the Drovers Cattle Network. The developers also wanted to solve the problem that farmers had with flocks of birds devouring the major portion of their crops. The high tannin in Milo made the grain much less attractive to the birds and therefore, gave the farmers a higher yield. And now it is used in bird seed blends...quite a disconnect.

Seed eating birds are looking for the most amount of fat, fiber, and protein per unit of energy spent foraging for food. If you study the chestnut-backed chickadees that come to your feeder, you will see them pick up a sunflower seed, weigh it in their beak, and, if it is satisfactory, will take it to a branch to eat. If it is not satisfactory, they

Nutrition Content

	<i>Fat</i>	<i>Fiber</i>	<i>Protein</i>
Black Oil Sunflower	43%	13%	16%
Nyjer	40	14	22
Safflower	38	21	14
Sunflower Chips	56	4	24
Millet	4	6	11
Peanut	45	2	24
Milo	2	2	11
Corn	2	2	8

Source: National Bird Feeding Society • www.birdfeeding.org

Wildlife Fest!

The Wildlife Education & Rehabilitation Center's 16th Annual BBQ and Auction

Saturday, October 22, 2011 • 12:00 to 3:00 PM

Lunch served between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m.

Morgan Hill Buddhist Community Center
16450 Murphy Ave., Morgan Hill

- BBQ with all the trimmings! Wine, beer and soda included.
- Special menu for children.
- Unique live and silent auction items, including raptor handling lessons, personalized guided bird walks, and opportunities to attend a raptor release.
- Meet our educational ambassador team.
- Fun activities for children.

Adults (age 13-up) \$40 each

Children 5-12 \$10 each

Children under 5 free

(408) 779-9372

web: www.werc-ca.org

email: werc@werc-ca.org



The Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides the community with rehabilitation services for orphaned, injured and sick native wildlife.

Through our educational programs, W.E.R.C. encourages a peaceful coexistence between civilization and our native wildlife

Smart Phone Birding Apps

These new birding apps for smart phones and tablets are pretty amazing. They usually have photos, range maps, vocal recordings, and field mark descriptions. Any of these apps can be used for research, education, and brushing up on birdcalls.

Lisa Myers, our resident monthly field trip leader, and I have had discussions about the pros and cons of using these apps to "call in" birds in the field. There are many opinions in the field and industry. Some are in favor of using these to encourage elusive birds into the open. Others are wary of using artificial means to bring out birds especially during breeding season as it could cause stress on the nesting pair. Some people are concerned that the use of recorded vocals will skew the results of

birdathons by allowing participants to play the call, listen for the answer, and record the bird while other participants do not use these devices.

One expert expressed the concern that if a rare bird is spotted and a group of birders come to view it, the call gets played, it gets agitated and pops up, and this scenario is repeated throughout the day, how is that going to affect the bird. Is it going to make it easier prey? Is it going to exhaust the bird? Is it going to send the bird away?

On the other hand, playing a call in an isolated manner can produce exciting results. On one occasion

a rock wren was heard chipping. We played the call and he flew up to see who was around and stayed for quite some time looking for bugs once he was assured that he had no competition.

On a recent birding trip we heard a pileated woodpecker drumming on a nearby tree. We answered with a recorded drumming and call. About five minutes later, a female pileated flew up to where we were. We didn't replay the call though and she flew across the road and allowed us to get some good views.





LOOK WHAT
FREDDY FOUND!



Pretty Switchplates

Light up your room with colorful coordinating cover plates.

Kid's Corner

Call 358-9453 to reserve your space.

Reservation Required

Bug Eaters

Thurs. Sept. 15, 4-5 PM
For ages 3 to 9
\$8/child

Join us at Belgatos Park for fun activities to find out about helpful creatures that keep bugs in balance. Play games, sing songs, explore the trails in search of bug eaters, and create your own bug catcher to play with.

Super Spiders

Thurs. Oct. 20, 4-5 pm
For ages 3 to 9
\$8/child

Come to Los Gatos Birdwatcher to discover how fascinating these often feared creatures actually are. Watch a silly puppet show, meet some very special spiders including a live tarantula, and create a spider of your own.



New birdbaths and statuary

- Bunnies and Frogs and Turtles, Oh My!



2012 Calendars have arrived

- Time to get organized



Feeder

- Pole mount classic feeder has built in squirrel baffle.



Scarves

- Hand painted silk by local artists.



Prostaff Binoculars.

Great optical quality at \$200
- Buy Nikon and get a free promotional gift.



New Mugs

- For your shade grown coffee.

Mark your Calendars for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Wildlife Education Day

Saturday, October 22
10am to 2pm with an Early Bird Walk at Charleston Slough 8am

Annual Wildlife Poster Contest submission deadline, Friday, October 7th. For details call 408-252-3740, or visit www.scvas.org



Los Gatos Birdwatcher
King's Court Center
792 Blossom Hill Road
Los Gatos, CA 95032

#C0911

/ 2011

Pay to the order of Our Loyal Customer

15% Off One Item

Memo: Expires 09/30/11

One Coupon per customer, please.
Excludes sale items, excursions and optics.
Not to be combined with any other offers

Field Trips & Outings

Saturday Morning Local Bird Walks

Join us every Saturday morning for an enjoyable meander looking for birds. Call the store Friday nights after 7pm to find out where we are going the next morning. Except for our once a month all-day field trips, we go on a local bird walk from 8 to 10 am and return for bagels and shade grown coffee. Some of the nearby places we go to are Oka Ponds, Guadalupe Oak Grove Park, Belgatos Park, Almaden Lake Park, Shoreline and Charleston Slough.

No Charge.

Sunnyvale Audubon walks

First Wednesday of the month

Aug. 8, Sept. 7, Oct. 5 - Noon to 1pm

Bring your binoculars (loaners are available) and meet Freddy at the Sunnyvale Pollution Control Plant where Borregas and Caribbean meet off of 237. After entering the plant turn left at the first stop sign and continue to the end of the parking area. We will see raptors, shorebirds, and lots of ducks.

No Charge.

Fall Migration the Monterey Coast with Steve Shunk

Saturday, September 24, 8-6pm

Join Oregon naturalist Steve Shunk as he leads us through some of Monterey County's most productive migrant hotspots. We will start our morning at the northern edge of the Big Sur coast, exploring the trails and estuary at Andrew Molera State Park. Mid-day birding will take us to the marsh, beach, and riparian habitats at the mouth of the Carmel River. Our final stop will take us to Moss Landing, at the mouth of Elkhorn Slough. **Fee: \$35 + share of gas**

Let's Go Birding to Point Reyes with Lisa Myers

Saturday, October 29, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Last year we had to cancel the Point Reyes trip because of heavy rains, so we have scheduled it again for October. The Point Reyes area is a fall hot spot for birdwatchers. Just north of San Francisco, this land that forms the point that we call "Point Reyes" is a magnet for migrating birds. This open expanse of land provides ideal habitats for birds to refuel and continue southward. It also provides birders a memorable opportunity to explore beautiful open habitat. In addition to land species, we'll also scan the ocean for seabirds and shorebirds. **Fee \$25 + share of gas.**

Let's Go Birding to San Joaquin County

Saturday, November 19, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Spend the day visiting several birding hot spots of San Joaquin County. These hot spots are located around Stockton and Lodi and offer prime wintering habitat for Sandhill Cranes, Tundra Swans and waterfowl. We can also find raptors in great numbers on the eastern edge where we'll search for Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagles and Merlin. This will be a great day to see many magnificent species that return here to spend their winter.

Fee: \$25 + share of gas

Los Gatos Birdwatcher



PRESORT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LOS GATOS, CA
PERMIT NO. 43

King's Court Center
792 Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos, California 95032
408/358-9453
email: info@losgatosbirdwatcher.com
website: www.losgatosbirdwatcher.com

**See Gardening Expert
Sept. 10th on Page 1**

Return Service Requested



Printed on
recycled paper

Sage Advice...

Wish Mom and Dad a Happy Birthday and get a treat!



Dates to Remember

Closed Labor Day 9/5

8/21 – Photo Exhibition	9/6 – Freddy's Birthday
8/31 – John and Freddy's 37th Anniversary	9/12 – John's Birthday

Store Hours

Monday – Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday: 12 noon to 5 p.m.
Phone: 408-358-9453

